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## SOME PROBLEMS OF MEANING IN FOLKLORE TEXTS

By

G. A. LEVINTON

When studying any kind of text, be it a folklore or a literary one, beside the question: "what is the meaning of this text?" which is connected with the interpretation there always arises another question: how is the meaning expressed or formed in this text and this question belongs already to the competence of general poetics.

We may consider this question as more or less elaborated in respect of literary texts. But the fundamental difference existing between folklore and literary texts<sup>1</sup> renders it impossible to use directly in folkloristics results achieved for a literary material. In spite of a series of valuable works<sup>2</sup> this problem in folklore has not been satisfactorily solved yet. That gives reason to such preparatory research works like the present writing, too. On the example of a Russian wedding song we tried to show some peculiarities of the meaning of folklore texts and some ways of analyzing these meanings.

The subject of our analysis is a specific record, a variant because it is the problem of variants that may be worth of increased interest in establishing of folkloristic semantics. Although a variant is for a research worker the only given reality, still we cannot state that variants are just as real (and just as independent) as literary texts are. A variant does not exist in itself but represents a certain invariant text and is determined by the laws of this text. This is a multilevel determination and we may consider all folkloristic records either as the variants of some text (e. g. of a certain song), or as the representative of a certain genre (in our case the genre of wedding songs) or, last of all, simply as a folklore text, i.e. a text which represents to some common "laws" of all folklore genres and which belongs to a common, indivisible system, the folklore (and in works dealing with the problem of reconstructions of archaic models of the world it represents the wider system to which certain written texts belong be-

<sup>1</sup> We are not going to treat here this contrast (we have dealt with this question in our work: *Zamečanija k probleme "literatura i folklor"* [Some remarks about the problem "literature and folklore"] - in press) but we will take it in consideration in the course of further analysis.

<sup>2</sup> Among the works related to this subject we should mention: D. M. SEGAL: *O svjazi semantiki teksta s ego formal'noj strukturoj* (On connection of semantics and formal structure in the text). -Poetics, Poetika. Poetyka. II. Warszawa 1966; B. L. OGIBENIN: *K voprosu o značenii v jazyke i nekotoryh drugih modelirujuščih sistemah* (The problem of meaning in the language and in some other modelling systems) - Trudy po znakovym sistemam II. Tartu 1965.

<sup>2a</sup> See M. K. AZADOVSKY's studies about folk tales. These regional peculiarities mentioned by him in connection with the funeral lamentations cannot be always ranged in the innovations.

sides folklore ones). The wedding song as a component of a ritual is subject to two systems of laws: to one as a song, and to the other as a ritual act. So, of course, variants may be examined first of all as elements without an independent meaning which represents the meaningful text. So the question whether variants are real, whether they have an independent existence of their own, a meaning which distinguishes them from other variants – is not so easy to answer. It is made still more complicated by the fact that when the variant is considered not as a simple means of expressing the invariant but as something independent, it is usually being connected with such categories like “the individual of the song (tale-) teller”, “the peculiarities of local traditions”, etc. Naturally one can suppose that the meaning of the variant which distinguishes it from the invariant is the tale-teller’s or local innovations called earlier in folkloristics “spoiling the text” (in fact, from the point of view of the folklorist aiming at reconstruction that is what has happened), i.e. reinterpretation, or adding new levels of meaning not inherent to the given text or in some cases to traditional folklore in general (e.g. “level of social meanings” or as A. I. NIKIFOROV<sup>3</sup> called it, “class reflex” in the tale). On the example of our analysis we shall try to show that the semantic characteristics of the variant are not only such innovations and we shall examine the interrelations of the different levels of meanings within one variant. This aim determines the character of the analysis: it can not strive for completeness, it will only demonstrate some relations that are of special interest for us.

For our analysis we have chosen a variant of a widely known song put down in Pskhov in the middle of the last century.<sup>4</sup> This variant is by far not a good representative of the original, first of all because it is much shorter than other well-known variants but just this shortness makes it suited for a “formal” analysis and then its “incompleteness” gives us a good opportunity to show that even variants “of less value” preserve the characteristics of a rather complicate organization and go on representing if not the laws of the given invariant text, then the laws of a genre, folklore, etc.

Не буйны ветры понавeрли, —  
Незнакомые гости понаехали,  
Новые сени пообломчили.  
Чем-то мне, молодешеньке,  
Гостей потчивати?  
Нет у меня пива, вина,  
Меду ставленова.

Not stormy winds have arisen, —  
Unknown guests have arrived to us  
Destroyed the new porch,  
With what could I, poor young girl (or bride)  
Feast the guests?  
I haven't beer or wine  
Nor old mead.

<sup>3</sup> A. I. NIKIFOROV: *Motiv, funkcija, stil' i klassovyj refleks v skazke* — *Sbornik statej k sorokaletiju učennoj deiatel'nosti A. S. Orlova* (Motif, function, style and class reflex in the tale. A collection of studies in honour of the 40th anniversary of A. S. Orlov's scientific work). Leningrad 1934.

<sup>4</sup> Shejn. *Velikoruss v svojih pesnjah...* (The great Russian in his songs...) 1st vol. 2nd part, St. Petersburg 1900, No. 1753.

1. This song is being sung by the bridesmaids at the evening party, called "vetcherinka", so the first level of the meaning of the text is the opposition of the bridegroom's party to that of the bride at the wedding, which is characteristic for the verbal and non-verbal components in the first half of the wedding ceremony (before the nuptial benediction). This opposition and the emphasis laid on the guests being "strangers" here refers to the general wedding level of the meaning of the given text which is being expressed in such words as "neznakomyje" (i.e. "strange"), "gosti" (guests, cf. the etymology of the word; besides, since the certain historical period the meaning of the word "gosti" may include the meaning "merchants", cf. the motif of selling-buying in the recitatives of the paronymph, during the courtship etc.). The guests came as destroyers (Destroyed the new porch) and this stands in accordance with the general atmosphere of poorness in the bride's home, her "trouble" what to give to the "guests", meaning by this the "unexpectedness" of their arrival (see strangers), not finding or not wanting to find a way to treat them "in a proper way", the want of food at home necessary to treat the guests (level of expression) or at the ceremony (level of contents); the latter should be compared to the usual excuse when the suitors arrive: "her trousseau is not ready yet".

The "destroying" of the porch is connected not only with the fact that the bridegroom's party is generally considered enemies who have come in order to destroy but also in particular with a motif of opening the gates or the doors, very often with force (cf. the motif of besieging the town in the wedding songs); the "porch" may be combined with "gate" and "door" in a concept "entrance". Besides that it is emphasized in the song that the "porch" is "new" and this is characteristic for the ritual where a lot of things have to be new, particularly those belonging to the bride (so the whole trousseau should be prepared specially for the wedding, in some cases the linen used at that time should be newly woven and it is interesting that one of possible etymologies of the word *nevesta* "bride" connects it with the meaning "new").

This area of meanings is characteristic for the song being a component of the ritual at the home of the bride ("vetcherinka") or generally of the ceremony before the nuptial benediction. As a matter of fact in this paragraph we did not deal either with the structure of the text or with its characteristics as a poetic text. The text here simply appears as a set of words and all we must know about these words is that they form part of a wedding ceremony. In other words, in this part of the analysis we have approached the text in such a way as one who studies the ritual itself, and not the wedding songs, would have done.

2. In the former paragraph we have studied the text of the song in its direct relation to the wedding ceremony as a background (to the context in a wider meaning), i.e. we have tried to point out the components the being of which is determined by the fact that the song belongs to the class of wedding songs and which can be observed without a special analysis. The word "context" may be used here both in a stricter meaning (i.e. "what goes before and after the analyzed text", that is in a linear

meaning) and in a wider meaning too (everything that surrounds the song, the background of the song). The wedding is the context of the song in both meanings. But if we mean by context in a wider sense that the components of the wedding form an area of meanings of the song's components (as it has been shown before) then context in a stricter meaning renders it possible for us to point out another level of meaning on which the song will be a component of the ritual and as such, equivalent with its other components. The performance of the song is a kind of activity effected by the bridesmaids at the arrival of the bridegroom and paranymp at the "vetcherinka" and it is equivalent for example with the bow made at the arrival of the guests. On this level the meanings of the song will be the following: *a*) "the ritual character" – being obliged to be performed in the given regional variant of the ritual; *b*) the "character of non-prose" – it belongs to the non-prosaic genres, i. e. it belongs to the category of ritualized speech set in contrast with everyday talk; *c*) it belongs to the genre of songs which is specifically the genre of the group of the bridesmaids contrary to lamentations performed by the bride and recitatives of the suitor or the paranymp.

If we analyze the situation of the performance itself we may discover some further types of meanings. This song is addressed by certain partakers of the ritual to other partakers. The "performers" are here the bridesmaids, the addressee is the bride and she is named in the first person (by pronouns) while the bridegroom and his friends by nouns which are equivalent in this aspect with a third person ("they"). The implicit second person is for those addressed by the bride and they are most probably bridesmaids (one can see it well when comparing the analyzed song with bride's lamentations) or at least the whole group of the bride part of which is formed by the bridesmaids. So the "speaker" speaks about herself in the second person and lets the addressee have the first person. This can be explained partly by the fact that the hierarchy of the "persons" (and the lyrical genre itself too) prompts grouping them not according to the real situation of speech act but according to the importance in the given situation: the bride is the "heroine" of the song and the first person is reserved for her. But one can imagine another explanation too which does not contradict the former one. Formally only the first person is expressed in the text. In all other cases we may only speak about the samantic equivalents of the category of person in the following meaning: in every situation we may set apart those who do not take part or cannot take part (inanimate objects) in communication, which corresponds to the third person while the partakers of the communication are divided into two groups: the addressee of the message (second person) and the addresser sender, speaker (first person). From the above said it is clear that both in the analyzed text and in the grammatical category of person itself one can see well the contrast of the first and second persons with a third one (the first and the second persons refer to the partakers of the communication while the third person refers "to the object of speech"<sup>4a</sup>; this well discernible contrast can be observed, for example, in the special position of the pronouns of the third person which are often excluded

from the class of personal pronouns). This contrast appears in our text in a peculiar way. The existence of these two different situations: a real one (the girl's friends address the bride) and the described situation (the bride addresses bridesmaids), kind of Ich-Erzählung, the first and the second persons' changing place, their mixture may simply mean that the opposition between these persons has ceased. And then what is left is to contrast these two no more discernible persons with the third one who does not take part in the communication (on the level of the interpretation: with the "stranger"). The bride and her girl friends join in an indivisible "we" (an inclusive one, i.e. joining the addressee and the addresser) which is contrasted with "them" (see the plural forms of the verbs and the nouns referring to the "guests"). It is worth noting that another level describes the relation of the bride and her girl friends in quite another way (see in the 4th paragraph). This effect can be met with only in folklore where the text is performed, and specifically in ritual folklore where it is connected with the figure of the performer who is also an element of the text (when performing a literary or a non-ritual text, correlating the text and the figure of the performer could make only a comical effect, the spectators or the audience mostly disregard the person of the performer. Otherwise public recitations would be impossible without some restrictions: the performer should have the same sex as the "hero" of the text, etc. Cf. also the mediaeval or popular plays where men act in the roles of women).

Another effect in connection with the performance is that the designation "guests" with all its characteristics refers to the bridegroom and bridesman entering the house this moment. This effect existing in many wedding texts is connected with the usual double existence of object and person in a wedding ceremony (and in ritual in general). Persons and objects have their own independent existence and at the same time they have a certain function in the rite. They exist in themselves and are simultaneously described in the song. So for instance the "new porch", mentioned in the first paragraph, actually may be a rather old one, but nevertheless it is this very "old porch" that is the denotate of the words "new porch" as in another song it could be called the "broombush bridge" while it could have been made of another kind of wood and not exactly of broom-bush. The bridegroom, too, has such a double existence who in the mind of the bride and bridesmaids (or more exactly: in the conception expressed in the songs) is a dangerous representative of an another world and came here to violate, abduct and destroy. This conflict, the direct mutual relation between text and denotate, is usual in folklore texts but rare in literature where description can seldom be correlated directly to its objects out of literature (in the genre of epitaph, epigram, etc.).

←  
<sup>4a</sup> More exactly: the first and the second persons signal the identity of the participants of the narrated event with the participants of the speech event, i.e. of the act of communication. These are united in one "personal" person, contrasted with another "impersonal" (a third) person. See: R. O. JAKOBSON: *Shifters, Verbal Categories, and the Russian Verb*. (Russian Language Project, Harvard University), 1957, pp. 4, 6.

Both of these meanings (ceasing the antagonism between the first and the second persons, the formation of the specifically double figure of the bridegroom and the bridesman) are not exclusive characteristics of the given text but of the whole series of the bridesmaids' songs (especially for the songs bidding farewell to the bride) and the last one practically of all wedding songs.

3. The next level of meaning may be considered as a specific sphere of meaning of the text and not of the variant. Here we shall dwell only on the formula which begins the song, on the first two lines.

It is a well-known fact that the different forms of parallelism (the direct, the negative parallelism and the "Slavonic antithesis") are equivalent in folklore but still it is characteristic that within the variants of our text at the beginning of the song we can find both direct<sup>5</sup> and negative parallelisms and we have every reason to consider them synonymic.

The "psychological" parallelism, confirmed by the "formal" parallelism of the first two lines of the song (see more about it below) may be interpreted as a specific "identification" of the guests and the winds. It has some meaning in itself because it is characteristic for wedding songs in general that the bridegroom and his party are provided with magical features (for instance, when the bridegroom passes by the gardens burst into blossom, the fields get green), in the given case bridegroom and his party have something to do with the supernatural (with nonhuman beings like the world of animals, of plants, the elements, etc. are) and at the same time with dangerous phenomena (storm). But the real meaning of this identification can only be found with comparisons at a wider range. The identification of the bridegroom's party with the wind, storm occurs in wedding poetry, beyond the given text too, so for instance in one of the songs (known generally with its first line being: "From the wood, the dark wood") the female swan answers to the flock of geese in this way.

Не сама я к вам залетела,  
Занесло меня погодою,  
Погодой — невзгодою.

"I did not come to you by myself,  
It was the weather (the storm) which carried me here,  
The bad weather — the bad trouble".

In the parallel lines the bride says to the women of her new family:

Не сама я к вам приехала,  
Завезли меня добры кони,  
Добры кони удаля молодца

"I did not come to you by myself,  
Good horses carried me here,  
The good horses of a brave lad"

Не было ветру, вдруг навенуло,  
Не было гостей, вдруг наехало.

<sup>5</sup> For example: There was not any wind, suddenly it began to blow,  
There were not any guests, suddenly they came here.  
Shejn, No. 1854.

(variant from the manuscript collection of 1795, Shejn No. 2361). Here the song identifies the storm (weather) with the bridegroom's party (here: horses but it is not essential, it is a well-known metonymy which corresponds on a higher level to the identification of the bridegroom and his horse.<sup>6</sup>) The meaning of both wedding examples will be still clearer when we compare the wedding with the fairy tale. In other works<sup>6a</sup> we spoke about the analogy between the abduction of a girl in a fairy tale and those wedding songs which describe how the bridegroom abducted the bride and we compared in this respect the here mentioned wedding song motives with the fact that in the fairy tale not only the antropomorph or zoomorph monsters but also the wind can figure as abductors of the girl. All these gone-with-the-wind kings' daughters make clear the meaning of the identification "bridegroom's procession = wind, storm" where the identification implies the motif of the abduction of the bride and secretly hints at the aim of the "guests" (this motif can be still better seen on the second example – "It was the weather which carried me here" – but undoubtedly exists in the song analyzed by us too).

This case is very characteristic for the folklore poetry. It may happen in literature that certain components are hidden in the subtext and only by comparison with some sources out of the text can we understand the meaning of this part of the text. These are cases of citation (the term "subtext" in this meaning was introduced by K. F. TARANOVSKY<sup>7</sup>). But in a literary text it is artistical device which can not be understood by all the readers because the language of a literary text has a unic character. The reader gradually learns this language as he goes on with his reading and in this respect human culture appears as a kind of passive fund of the language which is getting formed step by step between the reader and the writer. The situation is quite different in folklore where the bearer of tradition principally *knows* the language these texts are built on. He need not compare the wedding motif with the motif of the tale in order to understand its meaning (but the research worker is bound to do so because he does not know, but only reconstructs the language), the bearer of tradition simply *knows* the meaning of the comparison which is inherent to the identification of the bridegroom and the wind itself. This motif which is part of the whole folklore system appears both in the song and the tale and the comparison here is simply a way of research which has nothing in common with the process of perceiving the

<sup>6</sup> See: R. JAKOBSON: *Linguistics and Poetics*. – in: *Style in Language*, ed. by TH. A. SEBEOK, MIT Press. Cambridge, Mass. 1966. 369–370 pp.

<sup>6a</sup> G. A. LEVINTON. 1. *Svad'ba kak dialog* (The wedding as dialog) (in press); 2. *Svadebnyj obrjad v sopostavlenii s drugimi – Tezisy IV Letnej shkoly po vtorichnym modelirujushchim sistemam* (The wedding ritual compared with others. – Theses of the IVth Summer School dealing with secondary modelling systems). Tartu 1970.

<sup>7</sup> K. F. TARANOVSKY: *Pcholy i osy v poézii Mandel'shtama* (Bees and Wasps in Mandelstam's Poetry). To Honor Roman Jakobson, Vol. III. The Hague 1967. Idem: *Essays on Mandel'shtam*, The Hague (in press), cf. also: B. N. PUTILOV: *Ob épicheskom podtekste* (On epics subtext). In: *Slavjanskij Folklor*, Moscow, 1972.



text.<sup>8</sup> Such connections are regular in folklore (that is why they can be known “in advance” both by audience and performer), but in literature, in the case of citation, the method of reading can be used only in a concrete case and is in no connection with the general laws of the language of the given text or writer (except for the principle of citation itself).

More similar to the examined case is the specific use of some words in all the texts of the same author. When reading a concrete text we compare the meaning of the word in question to other uses by the same writer and so we can understand those additional meanings given to the word in this text by the writer. Now we are speaking about the permanent meaning<sup>9</sup> within the language of one writer. However there is no identity between the languages of the writer and the reader here as there is in folklore where the whole collective is the bearer of the language; the reader of a literary text must reconstruct the language not known to him up to that time.

4. Passing over now to the variant itself we must state in the very beginning that here too the analysis cannot be complete. For instance the phonological level will not be examined because we work with an orthographical record which does not convey the vernacular features and the reconstruction of the pronunciation on the basis of dialectal descriptions would be beyond the scope of such a short publication. Besides, there would appear another problem, as we don't know what is the difference between the performed folklore text and the common speech in the given place and time. The possibility of such a difference is well-known but we can hardly determine it beforehand, in every concrete case.

The formal characteristics of the text distinctly show the structure: the first and the second lines are the closest to each other. The third line joins them and there are some features which bring nearer the second and the third lines, against the first one. Most important is here the syntactic parallelism.

1. N<sup>e</sup> + adjective (short form) + nominative of the noun (subject) + the verb in past tense, plural form (the grammatical categories refer to the Russian grammar. – remark of the translator).

2. Adjective (full form) + nominative of the noun (subject) + the verb in past tense, plural form.

3. Adjective (full form) + accusative of the noun (object) + the verb in past tense, plural form.

<sup>8</sup> It would be more right to speak not about the perceiving but about the functioning of the text. The word “perceiving” refers to some hypothetic period when the bearer of the tradition understood the text in its primary meaning and full complicity. We can hardly state that there ever existed such a period but the hypothetic reconstruction of such a perceiving may be considered as an absolutely correct method of research: the text functions as if its bearers would really perceive, comprehend this meaning. When we speak about primary meaning (not innovations) we can state that the bearer either understands the text just in this way or does not understand it at all.

<sup>9</sup> Permanent meaning is not one meaning excluding all the others but a repeatedly, not once occurring meaning. This reservation is necessary for folklore, too: so for instance the wind invoked by an orphan bride to sweep away the grave of her father can hardly be brought in connection with the here analyzed motif.

Here we remark that the second and the third lines make up one sentence and the verb at the end of the third line is symmetric with the verb in the second line, they have the same syntactic function and join the same subject. So, the syntactic resemblance of the second and third lines is compensated by the weakening of the parallelism of these lines (while in the first and second lines the nouns are in the same case, in the second and the third lines this identity is only formal because the nominative of the word "seni (porch)" coincides with the accusative full form of the adjectives (contrary to the short form of the adjective used in the first line) as well as the absence of the word "ne" (no) at the beginning of the line which, as it refers to the whole sentence and not only to the following adjective, is an independent word (although it has no stress).

But on the other hand the first and the second lines are connected with each other (against the third line) by the verbal prefixes: in all three lines there are verbs in perfect form with two verbal prefixes; the first prefix joins all the three lines (just as the inflexion of the plural and the suffix of the past tense); the second prefix (beside the thematic element of the verb) contrasts the first and the second lines with the third one:

- 1 po-na-veyali
- 2 po-na-yehali
- 3 po-ob-lomili

In the same way the anaphora weakens too (which is in the first and second lines morphologic, and in the first, second and third lines phonologic).

1. Ne
2. Ne-
3. No...

We observe that this combination of "N + vowel" with its lexical meaning is repeated in the sixth line too (*Ne<sup>t</sup>*) and in a weaker form (nasal sound + vowel) in the seventh line (*m'odu*).

This separation of the first three lines is supported also by the stress (as the questions of folkloristic versification are still disputable we daren't call it a metrical level).

- 1st line: 3 stresses, dactylic ending of the line
- 2nd line: 3 stresses, dactylic ending of the line
- 3rd line: 3 stresses, dactylic ending of the line
- 4th line: 3 stresses, dactylic ending of the line
- 5th line: 2 stresses, hyperdactylic ending of the line
- 6th line: 3 (4) stresses, dactylic (male) ending of the line
- 7th line: 2 stresses, hyperdactylic ending of the line

It is only the sixth line that causes difficulties for interpretation because it is not clear whether the stress remains on the word "vina" (wine) or it becomes unstressed because of the previous endings of the lines. It is obvious that in the last case the word "menya" (me) gets stressed but if the word "vina" keeps its stress then, as it seems,

the word “menya” loses its stress. Only we can't know it for sure and so it is quite possible that the sixth line has four stresses.

Finally, we may introduce some thematic argumentation too: i. e. a division into narration and addressing but here we must observe that in the first part – in the 1–3 lines – there are no formal marks of the bride's talking “in the first person”. It is quite possible that the 4–7th lines contain direct speech, not introduced by any formal marks;<sup>10</sup> but it does not contradict the interpretation proposed in the second paragraph for the category of the person as the songs performed by the bridesmaids “on behalf of the bride” are not confined to the given text. The number of stresses and the “themes” render it possible to divide the text into two parts:

1. The 1–3th lines with a dactylic ending which have three stresses are connected by parallelism.
2. The 4–5th lines are the alternation of lines having two and three (four) stresses, accompanied by resp. hyperdactylic and dactylic endings.

On the other hand the 4th line too may be joined to the first part if we separate the lines (from the viewpoint of stress) up to the first one with two stresses, i. e. to the first breaking of “inertia” of the three stresses (and the dactyls).

The first part contradicts the second one also in using verbs in the past tense (perfect), while in the second part there are no forms referring explicitly to the tenses (if only the different zero forms are not considered as such); as to the content this part can be related to the present tense.

In the following we would like to give the interpretation of the distribution of some grammatical (morphological) parameters.

The first part differs from the second one in using the nouns in the function of subject or object (in the first and the second lines the nouns have always the function of the subject), and these nouns are in the plural, either in nominative (the first and the second lines) or in a form of accusative which coincides with the nominative one (homonyms).<sup>10a</sup> The second part beside nouns contains also pronouns (which are in oblique cases and have the function of the subject), there is not one of them in nominative and contrary to the third line the accusative here differs from the nominative. Beside the accusative, the rest are genitive, instrumental and dative. The group of the nouns in the 6–7th lines is in genitive which may either be considered genitive partitive or genitive negative (the genitive partitive is recognizable only in the word “m'odu” but even there it keeps the function of the genitive of negation).

<sup>10</sup> In another variant this direct speech was introduced by the following sentence: “Vosplakalas' svet Marjushka” (Splendid Marjushka burst into tears), so the interpretation proposed in the second paragraph cannot be applied for this case.

<sup>10a</sup> It would be more exact to speak about the *syncretism* of these cases. (See: R. O. JAKOBSON: *Morfologičeskie nabljudenija nad slavjanskim sklonenijem* [Morphological examinations about Slavonic declination]. Selected Writings, Vol. II. The Hague 1971.)

If we separate the first part as containing the 1–4th lines then within this part the contrast of the “guests” and the “bride” can be well observed on a grammatical level.

Guests – direct case (nominative) in the plural

Winds

Bride – oblique case (dative) in the singular

Porch – direct<sup>11</sup> case (but not nominative), in Russian formally – plural, but semantically – singular (i. e. the markers of the former two groups cross in this word.)

The “porch” takes here an intermediate position as it relates to the bride (her house) but at the same time to the guests (as the object of the action to the subject and because of its place in the house having a transitional role – for the bride and the bridesmaids being in the house this is an external territory). This contrast may be interpreted as a representation of plurality of the bridesmen coming for the single bride (see the swan in the mentioned song which is joining the *flock* of geese) as well as of a contrast between the activity of the bridesmen and the passivity of the bride which can be traced back through the whole first half of the wedding.

The same relations and interconnections may be revealed in the full text of the song in a more complicated form.

The word “guests” (and “winds” too) occur only in direct cases (nominative and accusative). Besides that only the “porch” stands in accusative. The bride is never referred to by a noun<sup>12</sup> but only by pronouns in oblique cases, singular. The objects referring to the bride (that she lacks) are in genitive (and here we may mention the pronoun “chem” in instrumental case).<sup>13</sup> If we introduce now the feature “animate/unanimate”<sup>14</sup> and range the “winds” into the animate category the justness of which we have already proved because the song here identifies them with the guests, then the picture is the following:

Animate: “bride” – in singular, oblique case; “guests” – in plural, direct case.

Unanimate: they occur in different cases (accusative, dative and genitive), except nominative and all the nouns denoting objects are considered according to tradition as words that have no formal category of number: “porch” (seni) – pluralia tantum; “mead” (m’od), “wine” (vino) denote materials and these nouns have no plural (without a change of meaning) (the use of the genitive partitive proves that

<sup>11</sup> In connection with separating nominative and accusative as “direct” cases see: R. O. JAKOBSON: *Morfologiceskie nabljudenija*, op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> “Molodeshenka” is a short form of an adjective having an archaic declination (substantive paradigm), not a noun (that is, not a substantivized adjective) but it would not make any difference if we comprised this word into the analysis as a noun.

<sup>13</sup> It is just the pronoun “chem” (nominative “chto”) and not the pronoun “chem-to” (nominative “chto-to”).

<sup>14</sup> The pronouns in the first person are considered as animate though this feature does not exist in respect of pronouns but only a *person* can function in the first person; in the given text this pronoun refers to the bride.

there is no possibility of forming the plural forms); and at last the noun "beer" (*pivo*) belongs to the same class of material nouns and has no plural form at all just like the pronoun "chto" (*singularia tantum*).<sup>15</sup>

So in the given text the contrast of singular and plural refers only to the *active personages* and is connected with the contrast of the plurality of the bridesmen, the whole bridegrooms party to the "loneliness"<sup>15a</sup> of the bride, torn away from her environment and being incorporated by the group of the bridegroom.

As it turns out from this analysis the folklore variant has a rather complicate inner structure and can have new meanings, not characteristic for the invariant text. These meanings need not be innovations at all in the above mentioned sense but these immanent meanings of the variant remain within the limit of the "primary" meanings of folklore and are not connected with any reinterpretation, "distortion" of the text.

But there exists, as one can see from this analysis, a profound difference between the meanings of the folklore variant and the literary text. This difference can't be defined with such terms as "simplicity", "primitivity", or "complicity". All attempts, on the basis of the analysis, at the declaration of one text to be less complicate (i. e. much more primitive) than the other one (for instance the folklore text against the literary one) should be justly refused and sent back to the researcher who was not able to discover deeper layers of the meaning. But without making any statement about the comparative simplicity of the structure of folklore texts (we hope that our analysis has proved just the contrary of it)<sup>15b</sup> we may make some conclusions about the interrelations of the different kinds of meanings of the folklore variants. As we have gone in details of each level of the meanings with almost the same fulness we can see that in the semantics of the text those levels have a much greater role which are not, in fact, connected with the variant but with a much wider field of sense (with ritual, genre, folklore in general), while the literary text may be characterized with contrary interrelations of levels: the fundamental meaning is in the text itself, and the semantics of genre, the literary trend, etc. have a comparatively less and (qualitatively) other role. So in literature semantics of the genre is rather a category of poet-

<sup>15</sup> Anyhow we may confirm that the enumerated words are related to the opposition of singular/plural in another way as those words of the analyzed text which belong to the category of animate.

<sup>15a</sup> As we have already remarked the category of the person (compared with the conditions of performance) gives an opposite meaning. So the song simultaneously describes two situations: the bride is placed among her girl friends (contrasted by the song with the group of "strangers") and that she is not placed into this group, she is an outsider, "a lonely one", so the relation between these two levels of meaning in the song correspond to the order of events of the wedding ceremony (at first she belongs to her own group, then she "parts" from it, the next stage: incorporation in the "strangers" group is not represented in the song), a certain compression occurs, two situations in succession coexist in the song as if they occurred simultaneously and so the time axis is "implied" in the text.

<sup>15b</sup> The organizations of the lower levels of folkloristic texts is treated by R. JAKOBSON: *Subliminal Verbal Patterning in Poetry*, In: *Studies in General and Oriental Linguistics Presented to Shiro Hattori*, ed. by R. JAKOBSON and SHIGEO KAWAMOTO, Tokyo, 1970.

ics than poetry. This genre-semantics appears in the form of certain restrictions, additional meanings<sup>16</sup> and has not the same sensible reality as in folklore.

Thus the differences in the semantic structure of literary and folklore texts must be looked for first of all in the character of this semantics itself. But this question goes beyond the scope of this work and here we must confine ourselves to make only one remark: as one can see, in folklore the area of meanings is given *beforehand*, it "precedes" the text and is expressed in it while in the literary text the meaning *is formed* in the text itself. Folklore text can be differentiated from a literary one just by the fact that the extratextual meaning is expressed in it although the *way* how these meanings in the folklore texts are expressed is very near to the *formation* of the meanings in literary texts.

<sup>16</sup> Here we speak about the new literature, the mediaeval one can just in this respect be treated to a certain extent together with folklore (cf. the idea of the "poetics of identity"). The poetry of classicism requires a special analysis.